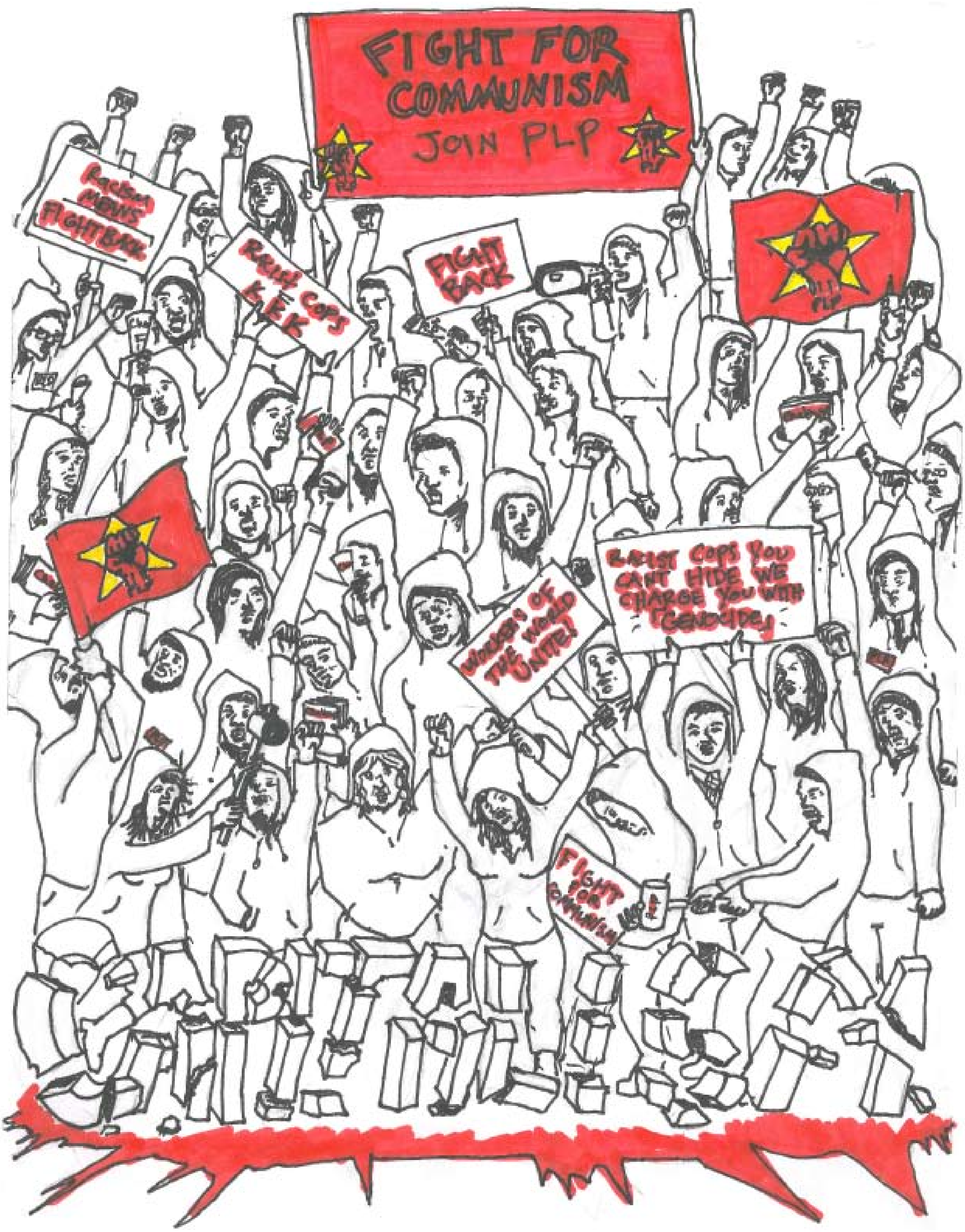
PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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SEE INSIDE FOR MORE

From Florida to the Bronx to Afghanistan
Capitalism Breeds...

The racist profit system has killed two black teenagers — Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, and Ramarley Graham in the Bronx, N.Y. — and 17 unnamed Afghan working-class civilians. These horrendous murders are nearly beyond comprehension. But the history of capitalism is the story of racist slaughter. These outrageous, cold-blooded killings prove it once again.

A racist vigilante — a self-appointed neighborhood watchdog — stalked Trayvon, 17, who was innocently walking to a friend's house carrying only candy and soda. Trayvon was fatally shot, the vigilante said, because he was "suspicious" (see page 3 and 4). This "suspicion" was based solely on the fact that he was "walking while black" in a mostly white neighborhood. After local police stated that the killer, George Zimmerman, acted in self-defense, they let him walk free. Only working-class fury over the murder forced the temporary ouster of the Sanford police chief, whose force has a history of ignoring violent crimes against black residents. Only nationwide protests — and the threat of more militant action — forced the state and federal governments to launch their own belated investigations, a month after the fact.

But the power of racism cannot be underestimated. In a disgusting ploy to blame the victim, the bosses' media have put out an unsubstantiated report that the unarmed Trayvon, who had no juvenile offender record, attacked his stalker before he was shot.

Ramarley Graham was confronted by a wolf pack of Bronx cops who said they "thought" he had a gun and chased him into his grandmother's apartment on the "suspicion" that he possessed marijuana. Then they killed the unarmed 18-year-old outright (see page 3).

Beyond the official lies and cover-ups, here are the facts: The Ku Klux Klan in blue has put down two more young people as if they were animals. Two more families have been cheated of seeing their children live out their lives. These murders are crimes against the entire working class. We are all Trayvon Martin and Ramarley Graham.

Then there is the massacre of eight Afghan adults and nine sleeping children by a soldier trained as a killer by a U.S. imperialist war machine (see CHALLENGE, 3/28.) He left his base, went door-to-door to three villagers' homes, shot the helpless people, and returned to his base. Then he went back to finish the job, callously burning the dead bodies.

But individual cops, those who want to act like cops, and "deranged" soldiers aren't the main killers. It's the unchecked racism of the capitalist system that breeds these atrocities against our class. They will continue and get worse, for one stark reason: The bosses benefit from racism.

Racism and Super-Profits

Racist wage differentials and mass unemployment reduce wages for all workers. By lowering family income for black and Latino workers as compared to white workers, the U.S. bosses net at least $300 billion annually. At the same time, the bosses are free to cut the wages of white workers by threatening to replace them with black and Latino workers. Racism hurts the entire working class.

The same division and exploitation holds true worldwide, and in many places is even more extreme. By attacking wages and working conditions for workers on six continents, the world's capitalists reap trillions in super-profits.

Racist cop terror and racist mass imprisonment reduce the threat of urban rebellion, one of the bosses' biggest fears. Racist segregation further weakens working-class unity and the ability to fight back. And racist dehumanization of "foreign enemies," relentlessly hammered into GIs by the U.S. brass (see below), furnishes the "will to kill" needed by U.S. rulers to conduct their widening oil wars.

The crocodile tears shed by U.S. President Barack Obama and all his politician cohorts, black, Latino and white, are exposed by the racist system they represent. They use their hypocritical shows of sorrow to cover the racism that kills, kills, kills in wars worldwide.

The sharpening global competition between U.S. and rival imperialists is cutting into U.S. profit rates. As a result, the international working class is facing escalating racist attacks from U.S. bosses who are determined to boost their profits.

One such assault is the "new face of labor," the ugly offspring of union bosses' alliance with U.S. capitalists. In early March, AFL-CIO hacks trumpeted the unionization of a few car washers in Los Angeles. The "triumph" of $8-dollar-an-hour wages for the mostly Latino workers amounts to $16,000 a year, barely half the poverty threshold that makes a family of four eligible to receive free school lunches.

Then, following Obama's bailout of GM and Chrysler, wages were "restructured" to pay new hires $14 an hour, half the pay of veteran workers. In another union "victory," giant Caterpillar Inc. recently moved locomotive production from London, Ontario, which paid workers $30 an hour, to a new plant in Muncie, Indiana, which offered only $14 and far lower benefits. Big Auto's sellout pacts, greased by Obama and George Bush, Jr., provided the precedent.

The racism in the auto industry is shown clearly in the U.S. southern states, where lower-paying contractors have infiltrated even the unionized factories. At auto parts plants, which are erected close by and sometimes within existing auto assembly plants, both black and white workers are paid as little as $8 an hour, barely above the minimum wage. Why have the auto bosses targeted the South? Because that's where the ruling class has historically enforced intense Jim Crow racism, which busted unions and imposed the worst wages and dangerous conditions in the U.S. Again, racism leads the bosses to make billions in super-profits.

Stop, Frisk, Shoot, Jail

Beset by increasing foreign competition, mainly from China, U.S. industrialists have fewer manufacturing jobs to dole out. To control the disproportionately black and Latin unemployed, capitalists call out their killer cops. In New York City, multi-billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly staunchly defend their "stop-and-frisk" campaign against young black and Latino men. The racist policy hits nearly 750,000 young workers a year and can easily become stop-frisk-and-shoot, as Ramarley Graham's killing shows.

Incarceration rates reflect the U.S. bosses' heightening racist crackdown on increasingly jobless and alienated workers. After holding steady from the 1920s on (with a brief spike during the Great Depression), the number of those jailed or on probation or parole began to skyrocket in the 1970s. That was the period when U.S. rulers were rattled by defeat in Vietnam and challenges from Europe and Russia.

Before 1975, the norm for the number in custody was one million. Today, with U.S. control of the Middle East at severe risk and China rising, it's five million. Black and Latino workers are seven times more likely to find themselves in custody than white workers.

In the name of patriotism and "national security," Bloomberg and Kelly have extended this racism throughout the New York metropolitan region by spying on innocent Arab and South Asian workers, including Christian immigrants from Middle

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Capitalism Created Racism

Racism, a worldwide phenomenon, owes its creation to the first capitalist imperialists. Five centuries ago, it began with the Spanish and Portuguese, and later the Dutch, British and French, who used the notion of "superior" and "inferior" peoples to justify their colonization and exploitation of the New World. (Later, the capitalists threw in the equally racist concept of meaningless "ethnicity," as in the British lords' subjugation of "inferior" Irish workers.) The utterly unscientific concept of different "races," and the phony hierarchy among them, served the colonizers by falsely justifying the importation of African slave labor to their New World plantations. In turn, the colonizers used slavery to exploit European-born workers in the one-step-away category of indentured servant. To this day, capitalists have continued to super-exploit some groups of workers to enable their exploitation of all.

OUR FIGHT

✯Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✯Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✯Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✯While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✯Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

✯Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✯Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✯Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✯Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✯Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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...Racist Murders

Marchers Blast Murder of Trayvon Martin



Occupy in Union Square: protest racist murders

NEW YORK CITY, March 21 — "Whose Streets? Our Streets!" "The Cops, The Courts, The Ku Klux Klan, All Are Part of the Bosses' Plan!"

About 2,500 demonstrators, mainly black and Latino youth, defied the NYPD and protested the February 26 racist murder of black teenager Trayvon Martin, by George Zimmerman — a racist one-man neighborhood watch vigilante in Sanford, Florida. At this writing, Zimmerman remains free.

Most demonstrators demanded Zimmerman's arrest and conviction. While hundreds regrouped before a second march, a PLP member pointed out that racism won't stop until we stop the racist system of capitalism. "They want us to elect Obama again. But Sean Bell, Oscar Grant, Patrick Dorismond, Amadou Diallo, Ramarley Graham — how many more people will have to die before we realize we need communist revolution?"

Block Police Convoy

Young working-class students chose to fight back instead of obeying "rules." Without permission or a permit, young people led the crowd into the streets, literally leaving two black liberal City Councilmen behind. The march surged as thousands more workers and youth joined from the sidewalks. Protestors threw large plastic safety dividers into the streets to block a convoy of police cars that were using their blinding lights and blaring sirens in an attempt to push protestors onto the sidewalk.

At one point the City Councilmen's staffers pleaded with PLP members using the bullhorn to take the crowd to the politicians. "The leadership of the march is this way," they insisted, pointing in the opposite direction from where everyone was marching. PLP marched with the masses, defied the politicians and led with chants of "Racist Cops, You Can't Hide, We Charge You with Genocide," and "Asian, Latin, Black and White, to Smash Racism We Must Unite!"

'A Badge Or A Swastika'

Some marchers taunted police with the chant, "Is that a badge or a swastika?" Most demonstrators aimed their anger at the racist NYPD, broadening a protest of one racist murder in Florida into a condemnation of the systematic racism of U.S. law enforcement.

"Don't shoot me, don't hurt me, for skittles and ice tea," youth cried, referring to the candy and drink Trayvon carried as Zimmerman stalked him from the store. Rush-hour traffic was shut down as mini-marches spun off to Times Square, the Occupy Wall Street's Zuccotti Park and circled Union Square.

The rally was organized online on short notice and gained national attention when Trayvon's parents announced they would attend. Trayvon's Dad told the young crowd, "You are all Trayvon." His Mom said, "It's not a black and white thing, it's a right and wrong thing," and told the crowd to "stand up for what's right!" The family's lawyer said that after the murder, the racist cops investigated Trayvon's background but not Zimmerman's.

One contingent returned to Union Square and opened a discussion about what to do next, march to Times Square or City Hall. A PLP'er said that in the future, we should march where the workers are: "Harlem, not Times Square; Flatbush, Brooklyn, not City Hall." We invited people to our May Day march in Brooklyn on Saturday, April 28.

We reviewed the action with some new-found friends. We made several contacts and distributed CHALLENGES. We participated on short notice and gave political leadership. One teacher plans to teach a lesson about Trayvon's case and the protest in class next week and we will have anti-racist actions on our jobs and in our schools.✪

Bronx: Capitalism's KKKops Are ALL 'Bad Apples'



BRONX, NEW YORK CITY, March 22 — "NYPD KKK!" chanted two hundred demonstrators marching with their fists in the air as they approached the 47th Precinct station house in the north Bronx. Workers and students from the Wakefield section have organized since the New York Police Department's recent execution of black teenager Rhamarley Graham last month. "That's what it was!" cried a neighbor of Rhamarley. "They executed Rhamarely and we will have the last word!"

Many family members of Rhamarley participated in the march and vigil that night. Although a few politicians, attorneys, and members of the Black Panther Party tried to steer the event, it was led primarily by members of the community. "They shot my son like an animal!" cried Rhamarley's father as the marchers blocked traffic in front of their home with signs that read, "Stop the Killer KKKops!" and "No Justice! No Peace!" Workers continued to identify themselves with the cops' victim as they chanted, "I am Rhamarley!"

Although this event was smaller than some past demonstrations, its anger was intensified by another police execution that we learned about one day earlier, the killing of Trayvon Martin in Florida. "From the Bronx to Florida, these racist killings are the same!" cried out one worker in front of Rhamarley's home.

A comrade from the Progressive Labor Party brought a teacher from a local daycare center to the demonstration. Before joining the march from the police station, this comrade and teacher offered to help two of the teacher's co-workers to draft a leaflet in response to the murder of Rhamarley. The leaflet called on all politicians, clergy, and elected officials to gather for a community meeting and "take action."

The comrade had a sharp discussion with the teacher and two daycare workers about the illusion of relying on politicians to solve these racist cop killings. They talked about the importance of workers and students organizing militant protests. Although the two workers could not be convinced to attend the evening's protest, the teacher accompanied this comrade to the rally and encouraged marchers to read CHALLENGE.

Fifty CHALLENGEs were distributed that evening and many great discussions took place. One worker received the paper and remarked, "It's great you're out here talking about how it's the system!" He added, "Most of these politicians are talking about how it's about a few bad cops." The comrade explained, "That's the difference between communists and capitalist politicians. We will expose how it's the whole capitalist system that needs racist cops to attack and terrorize the working class." The worker asked, "So you're saying we get rid of the cops when we get rid of capitalism?" He took five copies of CHALLENGE and exchanged email addresses with the comrade. The teacher was encouraged by the worker's response to CHALLENGE and agreed to help persuade other workers to attend the next protest.✪

Pakistan: Workers Fighting Hell of Capitalist Crisis

A capitalist crisis is ravaging Pakistan. The working class is fighting back against its devastating effects and against the bosses' attacks as the latter tries to shift the crisis onto workers' backs.

Almost daily workers are organizing demonstrations against the bosses across the country, including railroad and airline workers, and among teachers and women in the healthcare industry who've organized huge strikes. In Lahore, the Paramedical Association is waging a militant walkout to win a contract. They have no job security and work long hours at low wages.

Workers Beat Cops

In Faisalabad, during violent street protests against unemployment, the high cost of living and power cuts, workers smashed a government official's car and badly beat police and private security guards.

Workers at the Karachi Electric Supply Company (KESC) have been battling the bosses' thugs, police and army in street battles for two years. They're continuing their protests against privatization and layoffs. KESC bosses appoint highly paid "executives," relatives of current political leaders, to gain state support for their repressive tactics against workers, which includes torture.

Skyrocketing inflation and high prices of basic commodities are forcing many into poverty. Energy shortages, caused by wide-scale mismanagement in the state-owned energy companies, and soaring corruption, nepotism, bribery and favoritism hit hardest in the poor areas where electricity is cut by 70% daily. Only the national capital, Islamabad, and rich areas have power.

Capitalists without the right political connections can't get energy for industrial production so they close factories, adding to the massive unemployment and bankruptcies. Financial institutions are moving money out of Pakistan, depleting foreign reserves, limiting imports of necessities.

The national debt has increased 52 percent since 2008, ($1,000/person). The economy is dependant on loans from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. It was weakened by the suspension of a yearly $150 billion fund last November after Pakistan closed U.S/ NATO supply lines to Afghanistan in retaliation for the killing of 24 Pakistani soldiers by U.S. Predator drones.

Obama Plots with Pakistan Rulers

Obama and Pakistani Prime Minister Galani have met as both governments seek to restore their mutually dependant relationship: the Pakistan ruling class gets U.S. military aid and development funds and the U.S has an essential ally for its imperialist designs in the region.

Meanwhile, U.S. drones continue to kill hundreds of Pakistani workers and their families and anger against the U.S. erupts in demonstrations nation-wide.

Rising Joblessness

The crisis is hitting workers hard: factory closings increasing unemployment, wage-cuts, unsafe working conditions, harassment of workers on the job, double oppression of women workers and exploitation of children. Five million workers lost their jobs in the last year. Nearly half of the labor force is unemployed or underemployed.

In Faisalabad, Pakistan's industrial capital and third largest city, half a million workers have lost their jobs in the past two years as weekly power cuts halt production and bosses close factories, some moving to Bangladesh.

Because of the energy crisis, self-employed workers — tailors, masons, carpenters, mechanics and electricians and workers at CNG stations (Compressed Natural Gas) — cannot earn enough to support their families. Women healthcare workers are denied contracts. In Sindh province they haven't been paid for three months. Sindh teachers are denied status as permanent employees and therefore have no benefits or pensions.

People are dying from lack of basic health care. Suicide amongst the unemployed is becoming common. Recently a jobless man in a village close to Faisalabad, worried about feeding his family, committed suicide after killing his two daughters. A young man with a masters degree in business administration also committed suicide because of his failure to find a job over a year after graduating. His father had spent his life savings on his son's education.

PL'ers are exposing the bosses' divisive nationalism, building the Party in the factories, spreading our communist literature.

Poverty prevents four out of ten children from attending school. Eighty percent can't get a proper education. Parents are forced to send them to work to help sustain the family. Ten million school-age children work collecting garbage.

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Anti-Racists Cheer PLP's Call for Communist Revolution

CHICAGO, March 24 — Events and circumstances change if we are prepared, bold and militant! To support the call for justice for Trayvon Martin, twenty Progressive Labor Party members and supporters joined a rally of 300 people at Daley Plaza. The outraged participants demanded that the racist George Zimmerman be arrested for the murder of Trayvon in Sanford, Florida. Speakers called for everything except a communist revolution. Some wanted a U.S. Justice Department investigation, while others took the opportunity to vent about all sorts of past grievances. Only the PL'ers came there to build a movement to end this racist system with communist revolution. To that end, we circulated among the crowd and sold CHALLENGEs and distributed a Party leaflet.

After the initial rally, the organizers called on everyone to march to a second rally in Millennium Park. During this march, the PL'ers adopted a bold stance and chanted for communist revolution as the only solution to racism and racist killings. We came prepared with our bullhorn, and soon most of the marchers and many bystanders were joining our chants.

Upon our arrival at Millennium Park, we seized the momentum and drowned out the empty speeches of the organized speakers and called for communist revolution. The crowd gathered around our bullhorn and listened intently and cheered our speeches. We explicitly exposed Barack Obama and the imperialist wing of the U.S. ruling class, along with all of their racist attacks on the working class, from Chicago and Detroit to Baghdad. All the while, we were distributing leaflets and selling CHALLENGEs as fast as we could. The scene was electric and we were unprepared for what followed. The organizers of the event asked our comrades to lead the march back to Daley Plaza. They literally handed over the demonstration to PLP!



We took up the charge and led about 100 protesters back through downtown Chicago with communist chants and speeches. It was reminiscent of our actions in the 1980s, when there was still a shadow of a class movement. The young Party leadership changed the character of the march, arming the workers with a communist analysis and militancy. People along the march joined our chants with great passion. When we reached the Plaza, we held what was essentially a PLP rally! We gathered information from 20 contacts and are currently pursuing them.

The events of the day demonstrated that we must be bold and militant when putting forth the Party's politics. We should be confident that the working class is ready to embrace our revolutionary communist analysis and plan of action. Death to the racist profit system, power to the working class!✪

Students, Parents, Teachers Unite

Fight Fascist Attacks in U.S. Education

The bosses' assault against students and teachers in the United States has reached epic proportions. The capitalists are using standardized curricula and tests to assert more direct control over what is taught. They are attacking wages and conditions for school workers even as they blame teachers for the system's decay. In large and overcrowded urban districts, where student populations are predominantly black and Latino, dress codes, rigid discipline, and metal detectors are the norm. Students are treated like criminals, with no time off for good behavior.

These racist attacks serve two related purposes for the ruling class. First, they enable the bosses to lay an ideological foundation for intensified fascism. Second, they make it easier to intimidate and militarize youth for the inevitable broader wars against the bosses' surging imperialist rivals, such as China. The U.S. rulers need to use the schools to protect their profits and shore up their dominant — but declining — position in an increasingly competitive world economy.



This was spraypainted by OWS outside of a High School

Trillions for War, Zero for Schools

In the current period, the bosses' economic crisis and the trillions sunk into Afghanistan and Iraq have led to a wave of racist budget cuts and layoffs in public schools throughout the U.S. The results have been devastating. In New York City — the graduation rate hovers around 60 percent — and most graduates require remedial work before they can take college-level courses. In Philadelphia, where the schools had floundered under state stewardship for nearly a decade, district officials estimated it would take until the year 2123 to get all students up to grade level in reading and math. In February, after decades of local mismanagement, the state board of education revoked its accreditation for the entire Kansas City, Missouri school system. Even by the bosses' own low standards, the public schools are broken.

To distract workers from the real causes of why and how schools are designed to fail, the capitalists push one reform after another. Supported by billionaires like Bill Gates and Eli Broad, these range from the small-school movement to the charter school phenomenon to the bosses' current vogue, an all-out emphasis on "teacher quality." By using data-driven teacher evaluations, the bosses claim to have found an objective way to improve substandard schools and weed out unqualified instructors.

Useless Tests A Bosses' Tool

In fact, these evaluations are based significantly on student performance in standardized testing, where the margin of error is so high that they are statistically useless. But as a political tool for the bosses, the evaluations are invaluable. They give the rulers easy scapegoats for the failure of their schools: "bad teachers" and the unions that "protect" them.

Many of the headlines in the teacher-bashing campaign have been seized by Republicans like Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker or by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, or by capitalists like David and Charles Koch. But the main leadership for this attack comes from the dominant liberal wing of U.S. finance capitalism and its loyal servants: mainstream media like The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, and the Democratic administration of Barack ("Race to the Top") Obama.

These rulers do have disagreements. Some of their factions on the right, like the Koch brothers, advocate the gutting of collective bargaining rights and even the abolishing of unions altogether. More dangerous, however, are the liberals who want to use the unions to mislead teachers into thinking their interests are best served by the latest reform. Both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, the major teacher unions — containing 30 percent of U.S. union members — have willingly collaborated with the bosses in the new evaluation systems. The leaders of these organizations are loyal to the bosses, not to the workers. More insidious are new reformist groups like Educators for Excellence, which has enlisted broad support among young teachers in its reactionary fight against tenure.

The evaluations give the rulers easy scapegoats for the failure of their schools.

In any case, the political fallout is the same. Under increased pressure, teachers tend to become more controllable. Some workers get caught up in the blame game, with teachers blaming students and parents blaming teachers when the evaluation numbers fall short.

In a desperate effort by principals and teachers to keep their jobs, some schools focus their attention on students who are relatively close to grade level, triaging the ones who are further behind. As one New York City high school guidance counselor recently told the school's staff, "Don't waste your time on them." The children he was throwing overboard amounted to nearly one-fourth of the student population!

As always, the school reform's primary targets — and victims — are the students.

There never was a "golden age" of U.S. public education. While government funding has fluctuated over the past century, the schools'

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Obama Rescues Bosses' Profits

The bosses' attack against teachers has a precedent in their systematic dismantling of the standard of living of industrial workers in steel and auto, which was won through generations of class struggle. As in the schools, this attack was carried out with the express support of the leadership of the unions.

In his State of the Union address in January, President Obama claimed victory for "rescuing" the auto industry: "We got workers and automakers to settle their differences." What he really meant was that the bosses forced the workers to accept a two-tier wage system, with new hires making $14 an hour, or half the wages of their previous hires. This give-back was achieved with the active support of the United Auto Workers union leadership. For the bosses, "settling differences" always means protecting bosses' profits and attacking workers.

Occupation Protests Columbia's Expansion

NEW YORK CITY, March 26 — A five-day occupation in West Harlem on 125 Street is protesting Columbia's University's displacement of primarily black and Latino residents and businesses to build a new campus. About 50 Columbia U. students, community activists and residents marched from the college 20 blocks north to the West Harlem site.

The main community contingent came from a church where for years PLP has been actively building anti-racist struggle. Students and activists began the occupation, within the expansion area, with a shelter and bathroom provided by a business that has been seized by eminent domain. At least 10 people have slept there nightly, while others came during the day plastering the building with signs and the neighborhood with leaflets.

On the 24th, the march on Broadway stopped at the site where a worker was killed and two others seriously injured two days before, during demolition work for Columbia. To save money, the University had contracted with a mob-run outfit, the same one responsible for another death in the expansion zone. We then marched to a nearby apartment complex, where the University and owners have been harassing working-class tenants, and trying to create a Columbia dormitory and market-rate housing.

Today, a forum at the University attracted about 100 students and community residents. Panel members described why students should fight the expansion; a public housing resident condemned privatization and failing services; a public health psychiatrist exposed the planned destruction of poor NYC communities and many in the audience gave moving testimonials. Students plan to continue the occupation on Friday nights, after an evening of discussion, followed by a neighborhood march on Saturday. Everyone was invited to the monthly social justice meeting we've organized at the Harlem church.

During the occupation, PL'ers had many discussions with students on the need for fundamental change. They recognize that bankers run their Ivy League school and inculcate them with ruling-class ideas to educate more capitalist leaders. PL'ers raised the idea that worldwide revolutionary change is both necessary and possible, although it takes patience and a long-range outlook. Most took CHALLENGE and some are interested in joining a study group.

For years, the anti-expansion group relied on politicians and the courts. When this failed, they started building from the bottom up. Most college activists don't see the need to ally with workers or the community. Building these ties is crucial. Actually, many will face unemployment and unaffordable housing and health care.

Overall, this week was a tremendous step forward in the movement's militancy, in the bonds between workers, residents and students, and in the level of political discussion. We'll deepen the understanding of the need for revolution with our new and old friends.

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

PLP School: Communism in Action

PLP's view on religion is an issue for one of the friends I brought to PL's communist school. He said that he is not religious but thinks that when PLP says, "We must fight religion," it alienates people unnecessarily from the Party. I believe that struggling with people around this idea requires sensitivity and skill. Religious beliefs are buried deep inside a person's psyche, wrapped up with love of family, hope, and various fears, all of which lie below the level of thought. Most people who consider themselves to be religious or have loved ones who are religious are good people who need communism and could become communist organizers. Therefore, it is important that they open and read "our book" rather than just judge it "by its cover."

Sometimes we can't prevent people from judging us unfairly; they are just not ready to take in ideas that contradict their world view. But sometimes we push people away prematurely by being insensitive or clumsy in the way we approach the question of religion. In my experience, most religious people who are interested in PLP can accept the fact that "religion is the opiate of the people" and that organized religion is used to divide and oppress people. It is our refutation of the existence of spirit, something that is independent of the body, that most challenges the religious world view.

Marx and Engels provided a scientific explanation for the great love, inordinate courage, and vast intelligence of which humans are capable, which many people interpret as "spirit". (They said, "Human consciousness is matter at its highest stage of development.") We should have more articles in CHALLENGE that help us understand these historical/biological/philosophical ideas so we can struggle more effectively with our friends and family about religion.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

My experience in this PLP school was fruitful. I brought my children and they enjoyed the school as well. Base-building with each other is always a benefit to the Party. Being involved in the group discussions aided me in attaining knowledge of the history of PLP. Participating in a revolution is a serious way of life. However, playing games and acting silly with comrades takes the edge off the ills of capitalism, which can really depress a soul. My children and I had a great time.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

We dealt with issues involving racism, fascism, sexism, and capitalists' greed for power, and the fight for the working class. PLP is aware of all the harm that is being done. They fight not for themselves, but for everyone. Day by day, millions of people worldwide are suffering and being abused. The capitalists are the main reason for this. The people, the power of their voices can be the answer.

More and more people are unemployed, and arrested, and most likely ignored. I support PLP for their organization and their attempts and determination in forming a new revolution!

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Our weekend school once again put the power of our collective on display. Young people who knew the Party from their localities came to know and see the organization on a broader basis. Aspects of our ideas on nationalism, racism and the history of the communist movement came out in the workshop discussions that had been on folks' minds for some time.

A weekend away affords us the time to allow long-standing questions to emerge and also to practice anti-sexist, multi-racial and intergenerational unity.

We enter our May Day season invigorated to organize, and look forward to holding this school again next winter.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Seventeen years ago, I joined PLP as a HS student at a Party camping trip much like this one. I saw the potential of a multi-racial, multi-generational Party working collectively to understand the world. What made the greatest impression on me was seeing communism on a small scale put into action. This weekend's retreat reminded me of the need to have confidence in the working class. Male and female comrades cooked together, cleaned up together, played games together. The young high school and college students gave sharp reports and led workshops. It's always amazing to see young people so clearly explain the problems inherent in capitalism and engage in the struggle to better understand our world.

Our future is bright.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

The PLP school has been a very enlightening experience for me. The discussions we've had have been particularly valuable, both personally and to sharpen the Party's line. One of the subjects we touched on was the role of ethnic nationalism in moving the struggle forward. Although there could be reams and reams of articles and studies on the topic, we all benefit from the intelligent and insightful remarks that were made in the discussion.

My weekend here at the school has been extremely enjoyable. In addition to the powerful discussions we've had regarding all aspects of the Party, there was also a lot of time for fun. It truly felt like the Party members were building bonds. It was also just fun to hang around a bunch of Marxists for once. I certainly feel more committed to PLP and struggling for communism

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

After coming to the communist school this weekend, my enthusiasm for working within PL to smash capitalism has surged. Living communally with this group of workers with various levels of revolutionary experience and passion has fueled my fire, inspiring me to work harder to build a stronger base at my college, my job, and among my friends and family. I still have enormous room for growth and know there are many specific areas I must strive to develop within myself, particularly my experience with dialectical materialism. Now, though — more than ever — I feel confident that I will take this responsibility seriously. We have a world to win, after all, and nothing to lose but our chains.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

I recently attended an inspiring PLP school with other students and workers from the Northeast. My favorite part of the weekend was participating in the discussion groups led by young Party members. From topics such as reform vs. revolution to organizing for May Day, the discussion leaders passionately fought for the life of the Party and struggled with others over our ideas. This reaffirms my belief that PLP will continue to grow and lead the struggle for communism!

We will win!

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Our 2012 communist school was a smashing success. Within the breakout group I worked with, we had many fruitful discussions. One in particular is worth mentioning here. On our final day, we focused our discussion on PLP's "Our Fight" statement. We were told to analyze our line and think of anything we might disagree with or struggle with when talking about the Party with fellow workers and students.

For me, as a relatively new Party member, I wondered why we do not explicitly mention the Marxist-Leninist idea of the state withering away so that we can establish a classless society. This is the highest form of communism, I argued, and it should be the aim of the dictatorship of the proletariat we set up once the revolution is successful in seizing state power.

A veteran PL'er argued that my point was already acknowledged implicitly in our call for the abolition of nations and for the world to be run by one party made up of the international working class. In addition, this PL'er explained the argument I made was philosophical and ethical while "Our Fight" is strictly a political vision.

I responded that philosophy and ethics are inseparable from politics. Adding a single sentence, in my view, about a stateless and classless society as the desired outcome of the proletarian dictatorship strengthens our line. It demonstrates explicitly our revolutionary optimism for the future. It shows our hope and faith in the prospects of our Party in that we can envision a time beyond the dictatorship of the working class, a time when we can finally abolish our own class because the bourgeoisie will have been totally destroyed, even if that is a thousand years away.

This is the type of discussion that makes me proud to be a PL'er. That new members can contribute constructive criticism with more seasoned comrades to make our Party better illustrates the dynamism of PLP. It should encourage those thinking about joining the Party to fully commit themselves to fighting for communist revolution under PLP's red flag. We need you. We have a new humanity to build. Join us!

Capitalism Breeds Racist Murders

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East countries. If we fail to fight racism against these groups, it will engulf our entire class.

GIs and Racist Brainwashing

The racist rampage in Afghanistan, shocking as it is, pales in body count compared to Obama-authorized night raids and air strikes that have wiped out thousands of innocent civilians. It reflects the deliberate racist indoctrination that U.S. military officers inflict on recruits to make them more efficient killers, pawns in the bosses' push to consolidate oil-producing territory (see CHALLENGE, 3/28). Iraq War veteran Michael Prysner said:

> *When I first joined the army, we were told that racism no longer existed in the military....And then Sept. 11 happened. I began to hear new words like "towel head," "camel jockey" and — the most disturbing — "sand n....r." These words did not initially come from my fellow soldiers, but from my superiors — my platoon sergeant, my company first sergeant, my battalion commander. All the way up the chain of command, viciously racist terms were suddenly acceptable.* (MichaelMoore.com, 12/26/09)

Now that they were no longer considered human, Iraqis became GIs' targets in sick shooting sprees. It didn't matter whether the Iraqis were armed or not; for dehumanized soldiers, it became a video game. "Point, Click, Kill," chanted U.S. officers, according to Prysner. Unfortunately, Prysner, despite his opposition to the war-makers, has chosen the futile path of electoral politics. He ran for Congress for a class-collaborationist socialist party.

Racism cannot be voted out. Nor can it be separated from capitalism. Racism is the foundation of the profit system that gave it birth and depends on it for its existence. That is why the Progressive Labor Party champions the fight against racism and for multi-racial, working-class unity: It is essential for a communist revolution. We must continue and intensify our fight in the class struggle against the evil of racism in all of our organizations and among all of our friends, co-workers, neighbors and classmates. Only by winning masses to communist politics can we save our class from the profit system's atrocities and construct a society that meets workers' needs. Join PLP and help us build this world!✪

Fight Fascist Attacks in U.S. Education

continued from page 5

purpose was always to reinforce capitalist values and the profit system. The overwhelming majority of children are trained for low-paying, subordinate tasks in the rulers' factories, infrastructure, support services, and military. More than ever, U.S. capitalism requires a politically reliable, highly regimented education system to feed a military that will secure its threatened interests worldwide. It's no coincidence that Obama's education reform agenda includes the re-opening of Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs at a number of colleges.

To meet the rulers' needs, the schools infect children with capitalist ideology: racism, sexism, individualism, and incessant competition for the best grades and test scores and then jobs, all against a backdrop of extreme racist and sexist inequalities. Rigid discipline and arbitrary rules nurture passive followers. Gross distortions of history — the "bravery" and "heroism" of genocidal monster Christopher Columbus, the "compassion" of white supremacist Abraham Lincoln — rob students of the ability to understand the world. Regimented teaching-to-the-test saps their creativity and analytical thinking. Daily doses of anti-communism steer them away from the one force that can change the world to meet the needs of the working class.

Graduating to Communism

If the situation sounds bleak, it's crucial to point out that it's only one side of the story. As the bosses make their plans, so too must the workers. In New York, for example, masses of furious parents, teachers, and students have routinely disrupted the Panel for Educational Policy (the rubber-stamp body that does Mayor Bloomberg's bidding) with standing-room-only crowds and deafening chants. Rising anger among teachers has led to fresh attempts to form a serious opposition caucus to the sellout union leadership in New York.

But while this anger itself is positive, and the Party must be immersed in these struggles, no reform will help students get the learning they need. It's our job to point to the systemic failures of education under capitalism and to win teachers, students and parents to fight for communism and join PLP. To truly educate our children, we must abolish the profit system. We need to create a new society to serve the needs of workers, not the tiny, parasitic minority of bosses. Forward to May Day!✪

Pakistan: Workers Fighting Hell of Capitalist Crisis

continued from page 4



Bosses' Tools: Nationalism, Puppet Unions

The ruling class is using two weapons to combat workers' militancy: nationalism to divide them and pro-boss puppet union misleaders to control them.

These unions are affiliated with the ruling party. They lead strikes but calm down workers' anger with lies like "your demands have been accepted and you will be rid of these problems soon." They help the ruling class to disperse crowds with tear gas and baton charges. They target activists for "disappearances," imprisonment and assassinations.

Urdu is Pakistan's national language, although the various regions have distinct languages. Until recently, for the most part, the population identified itself as Pakistani regardless of linguistic or territorial differences. Now the rulers are openly spreading nationalism, hoping to splinter the solidarity that workers in all sectors are developing. The President, one of the country's wealthy landowners, with estates in Sindh province, joined in, calling for "the integrity of Sindh." The Prime Minister announced that he would protect his language, Saraiki, by dissolving Punjab province if necessary.

Murderous riots broke out in Karachi (Pakistan's largest city) during last year's elections when both Sindhi and Urdu rival political parties employed thugs to attack workers, blaming other parties in order to influence workers to vote for their particular linguistic group.

To combat all this and give leadership to our class, PLP is always exposing the bosses' divisive nationalism and the capitalist system as the cause of all the workers' problems. We're unmasking the dirty role of the phony trade union leadership by building the Party in the factories and workplaces and by spreading our communist literature.

Friends and members of the revolutionary international communist PLP are convinced that only worldwide communist revolution can uproot the profit system's wars, exploitation, poverty and injustice. We're confident as we try to convert the terror of this economic and political disaster into an opportunity to build a communist movement under the red banner of PLP.

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times



Cops induce false confessions

NYT, 2/26 — Several months after Antonio Ramirez was shot seven times in Oakland, Calif., the police picked up a frightened 16-year-old named Felix, isolated him in an interrogation room late at night without a lawyer, rejected his pleas to see his mother, and harangued him until he began to tell them what he thought they wanted to hear….

They demanded, where was the gun? Felix denied having a gun. That's when….slyly, he made up something demonstrably untrue: that he had left the gun with his grandfather….He doesn't have a grandfather. Both grandfathers are dead.

Once the police had badgered a rough confession from Felix, they taped it….He stared at the document and realized that he had the perfect alibi: On that occasion Antonio Ramirez had been… in a juvenile detention center….

The murder case was dropped….The juvenile commissioner in Felix's case said, "Well, I don't understand — why would he confess?"

If you have never been tortured, or locked up and verbally threatened, you may find it hard to believe that anyone would confess to something he had not done….What on earth could be the motive? To stop the abuse? To curry favor with the interrogator? To follow some fragile thread of imaginary hope that cooperation will bring freedom?....

False confessions have figured in 24 percent of the approximately 289 confessions reversed by DNA evidence….Considering that DNA is available in just a fraction of all crimes, a much larger universe of erroneous convictions — and false confessions — surely exists.

Officers are taught to use all the tricks and lies that courts permit….

Big oil promotes big wars

Otherwords.com — The Iraq misadventure, it turns out, was enormously successful. No, not for the thousands of U.S. troops and families whose lives have been lost or ruined, nor for the hundreds of thousands of dead Iraqis, nor for the millions of Iraqis who have been displaced or impoverished.

No, the glorious success in Iraq is the return of the Western oil companies to that country. Saddam Hussein had chased them out….

Surprise, surprise, this routine also seems to be the template proposed for Iran, with additional wrinkles earned in Libya….

There's always money for war….

Electing 'our brother' didn't help

GW, 3/2 — Scores of disabled people on crutches and in wheelchairs fought police in La Paz, Bolivia's capital, last week over demands for better welfare support….

The protesters tried to break through lines using their crutches and wheelchairs but were forced back in a melee in which several people were hurt. The protest organizers declared a hunger strike by 10 adults and a round-the-clock vigil by the rest.

The clashes were another public relations fiasco for President Evo Morales, who has seen his popularity plunge….Bolivia's first indigenous leader swept to power in 2006 promising to ease poverty and inequality and was hailed a saviour in his first few years. But several marches on La Paz have illustrated the levels of disenchantment.

Phony diagnosis robs GI benefits

NYT, 3/3 — To the editor:

….I have been investigating personality disorder discharges for the last six years. In that time, I've interviewed dozens of physically wounded soldiers who were booted from the military with a phony "pre-existing personality disorder," which prevents the soldiers from receiving disability and medical benefits. They even have to give back a chunk of their signing bonus.

Soldiers severely wounded in combat are finding out on their final day in uniform that they will never get disability benefits — and they now owe the military thousands of dollars.

I have also interviewed military doctors about being pressured by their superiors to misdiagnose wounded soldiers. One doctor told me of a soldier who came back with a chunk missing from his leg. His superior pressured him to diagnose that injury as a personality disorder.

The numbers in this scandal are staggering. Since 2001, the military has discharged more than 31,000 soldiers with personality disorder, at a savings to the military of over $17.2 billion in disability and medical benefits.

Barack Obama….as a senator…put forward a bill to halt all personality disorder discharges. But as commander in chief, he has done nothing to halt these fraudulent dismissals.

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The Hunger Games

Don't Be A Player in the Bosses' Games

The Hunger Games movie, based on Suzanna Collin's first part of the trilogy, is the most popular film in theatres. When analyzed, there are many scenes that teach lessons about capitalism and the power we workers have.

The movie is set in Panem, what was once North America. Due to the failed revolution, the Capitol uses the annual Hunger Games to maintain fascist control of the masses. A boy and a girl of ages 12-18 are chosen from each of the 12 districts to participate in a nationally televised event in which they fight to the death until one is crowned victor.

The plot focuses on the life of working-class 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives in 12, the coal district. (For a detailed synopsis, see CHALLENGE, 3/28/12.) Almost everyone is utterly dispossessed. What was a crucial part of the protagonist's actions was reduced to a mere scene: Katniss's father's death. He was blown up in a coalmine accident.

Already, there is resentment of the Peacemakers (cops). Gale, Katniss's friend, fantasizes revenge for murdering children in the rulers' games. He also imagines escaping with their families, but without considering the rest of the people that are suffering just like they are. Katniss prematurely brushes off Gale's ideas as unrealistic.

When Prim "wins" the lottery for the Hunger Games, Katniss cries out "I volunteer as tribute!" The anger is evident in this district. When they were asked to clap, instead they salute a kiss towards Katniss with three fingers held up. This is both a sign of resistance against the Gamemakers and solidarity with Katniss.

Prim gives Katniss a mockingjay pin to protect her. This becomes a symbol for Katniss's struggle, and for rebellion. Katniss and Peeta are rushed to the Capitol, where the ruling class lives in the most grotesquely posh atmosphere imaginable. The children are awestruck by the abundance of food in the Capitol, while back home their people starve to death.

Their mentor is Haymitch, a past victor who is drunk most of the time as a way to drown his sorrows and rage against the system. The Capitol is the only place in Panem that anticipates the games with excitement. All the districts except for 1 and 2 (which are wealthy and train their children for the games) suffer as they are forced to watch their children being killed violently.



The night before the Games, Peeta says to Katniss "I don't want be just another piece in their games." Katniss doesn't fully grasp the meaning of this until later in the Game.

While the book was only from Katniss's perspective, the movie gives a wider view and draws on events from the second book. The control room where the Gamemakers plan for the tributes' clashes is shown.

There is an interesting scene where President Snow explains to the Gamemaker the reason for the Games. He explains he could easily pick 24 children and shoot them. The Games give people hope. He says, "Hope is the only thing stronger than fear. A little hope is fine, a lot is dangerous." He goes on to make a reference to Katniss's behavior, "a spark is fine as long as it is contained, so contain it."

The rulers can gear a spark towards their own fascist gains. Here,

Workers in District 11 revolt. They destroy the rulers' source of profit: sacks of crops and machinery.

we get inside the mind of a capitalist dictator. He understands how to control workers using "bread and games" as well as "hope and fear." He also acknowledges that the Capitol is dependent on the districts, the reason to further tighten the chokehold.

The film doesn't build much on human connections. Katniss struggles with her individualism. She makes an alliance with a 12-year-old girl from agricultural District 11, Rue, who is one of the only four black characters in the entire film. Rue's death was the most heart-breaking. Katniss humanizes the otherwise savage deaths in the Games by covering Rue's body in flowers and singing to her. She gives the salute of solidarity.

In response, workers in District 11 revolt. They destroy the rulers' source of profit: sacks of crops and machinery. This act of unity was a direct threat to the Capitol and the fascist peacekeepers rush to contain it. We see how unity of the working class can have an impact on the ruling class and can encourage the rest of the working class to fight back.

The rulers react by giving the workers "something to root for" — to channel their rage towards the victory of "the star-crossed lovers." The Gamemakers change the rules so that two tributes can win as long as they're from the same district. So with Peeta's wits such as his expertise in camouflage and Katniss' ability to hunt, they make a strong team.

The final act of defiance happens when the Gamemakers decide they can only have one winner. This shows how the bosses' laws are used to control workers. They are about to commit suicide when the Gamemaker called out "Stop! I present to you the winners of this year's Hunger Games."

Haymitch explains that Katniss's act of rebellion has dire consequences. The head Gamemaker is killed for not "containing the flame." The film ends ominously. President Snow crowns the victors and remarks about Katniss's mockingjay pin — a foreshadowing of both attacks and fightbacks to come.

The film makes an effort to cut out some of the explicit gore in the book: Peeta's leg wasn't bitten off, the mutts' eyes didn't resemble the eyes of the dead tributes, Katniss's left ear wasn't deafened by an explosion. Another interesting divergence from the book was that a child from the wealthy district realizes that the "only thing he learned was to bring pride to his district, which doesn't matter anyway."

In this society, children experience violence and many are out fighting wars before they reach puberty. Although the violence is taken to the highest level, it is not far from the truth. Many working-class children live through daily violence in order to survive. Many already live under fascism worldwide. In fact, the writer herself was inspired to write the trilogy after the mass murders in Afghanistan.

Though this film has working-class values, it is nevertheless a ruling-class movie for profit. *The Hunger Games* is expected to make more than $300 million mainly from the pockets of working-class families. We should always be cautious of the bosses' media. When this film is taken in context of the anti-communist trilogy, the children are used as pawns in the rebellion (see upcoming issue).

PL'ers and friends should point out that only a united working class can defeat the system. We need a violent revolution. The system depends on the workers. We have the power to bring it to a halt and destroy it. Defy the Gamemakers, the masters of war. We are the spark that is being contained. Become the fire that will build a communist society where we are no longer oppressed and no longer part of their games.✪

MAY DAY 2012 March with PLP

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM • LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO • PLP

April 28:
Chicago and New York

May 1:
LA: Olympic and Broad at 12 PM
Oakland: Fruitvale Bart Station at 3 PM